DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 136 517 EC 100 032

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TITLE Applying Behavioral and Political Principles in Developing Mainstream Special Education Programs.
PUB DATE May 76
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Midwestern Association of Behavior Analysis (2nd, Chicago, Illinois, May 1, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Conceptual Schemes; *Consultation Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; Exceptional Child Research; *Handicapped Children; Models; *Program Development; *Program Effectiveness; *Regular Class Placement; School Districts; *Success Factors
IDENTIFIERS Vermont

ABSTRACT

An analysis of variables effecting the success of mainstreaming programs in 27 school districts in Vermont--five of which were unsuccessful in that consulting teacher services were not maintained for more than two years, and 22 of which were successful in that consulting teacher services were maintained for more than two years--was undertaken. Results indicated that initial success and acceptance of the consulting teacher mainstreaming model was achieved through gaining administrative and institutional political support, and that districts involved in planned district development consistently gained the administrative and institutional support. Among proposals offered were that instructional units dealing with local school-community political systems and related behavior analysis be incorporated into consulting teachers' training programs, that a data retrieval system be developed that will measure levels of administrative and institutional support, and that the relationship of this support to the service effectiveness be further analyzed. (IM)

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APPLYING BEHAVIORAL AND POLITICAL PRINCIPLES IN DEVELOPING MAINSTREAM SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by

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Presented at the Second Annual Convention of the Midwestern Association of Behavior Analysis, Chicago, Illinois

May 1, 1976

EC100032

ABSTRACT

Mainstream special education programs provide a means for handicapped children to receive instruction in environments that are progressively more like those provided for non-handicapped peers. (Birch, 1974).

In Vermont, behavioral principles are used to enhance the educational growth of handicapped children in regular classrooms (McKenzie, 1972) and in training teachers to individualize instruction. (Christie, McKenzie and Burdett, 1972). Consulting teachers are trained at the University of Vermont to facilitate mainstream programs. (Fox, Egner, Paolucci, Perelman, McKenzie and Garvin, 1973).

Although long term success of mainstream programs depends upon the effective application of behavioral principles with children and teachers, the initial success of the program depends upon the acceptance and direct support of key administrators and the institutions through which mainstream programs are implemented.

Since this acceptance and support are crucial to the development of mainstream programs, it is proposed that a system be developed whereby acceptance and support behaviors can be defined, measured and increased.

The five political principles delineated by Berle (1969) constitute a framework for this system. These political principles are 1) that political power invariably fills any vacuum created by chaos within the political structure, 2) that political power is invariably personal, 3) that political power is invariably based upon a set of ideas and a philosophy, 4) that political power is invariably exercised through institutions, 5) and that political power is invariably paired with responsibility.

Administrative and/or institutional behaviors are defined for the school district political structure according to Berle's principles. Administrative behaviors relate to disseminating information related to mainstreaming needs; hiring and maintaining the support personnel necessary for mainstreaming; and directing and participating in mainstreaming activities. Institutional behaviors relate to endorsing mainstreaming, inviting mainstreaming support personnel (eg. the consulting teacher) to join the institution; and assigning mainstreaming activities.

During the past seven years, mainstream programs have been initiated in 31 of Vermont's 56 school districts. Five of these programs failed within two years after service was initiated. The remaining 26 programs succeeded, in that mainstream services were maintained longer than two years. The five programs which failed and the 26

programs which succeeded are analyzed in terms of administrative and institutional behaviors reflecting Berle's political principles.

This analysis supports the premise that although the long term success of mainstream programs is achieved through providing effective instruction for handicapped children, initial success is achieved through gaining administrative and institutional support of the school district political structure. It is proposed that instructional units related to gaining administrative and institutional support be incorporated into the second year of graduate training of all consulting teachers. (Knight, Christie, Egner, Paolucci, and Lates, 1975).

Introduction

Legislative and judicial mandates (Public Law 94-142, 1975) (PARC v. Pennsylvania, 1971), as well as cost and educational benefits, have been the impetus for providing special education in the least restrictive environment (Wolfensberger, 1970), (McKenzie, 1976), typically the regular classroom. This mainstreaming approach provides special education programs in environments which are progressively more like those provided for non-handicapped peers. (Birch, 1974). Regular classroom teachers often must develop new skills in their teaching repetoires in order to meet the individual needs of these children. In the past, most of these children were assigned to segregated special education or remedial classrooms.

In Vermont, principles of applied behavior analysis are used to enhance the educational growth of handicapped children in regular classrooms (McKenzie, 1972) and in training teachers to individualize instruction for these children. (Christie, McKenzie and Burdett, 1972). Teachers develop new teaching/learning procedures and refine existing skills through their involvement in inservice training programs carried on by a district consulting teacher. A consulting teacher receives training in a two-year Master of Education program at the University of Vermont. The first year of the training program is University based. During the second year, the trainee serves an internship in the school district in which he is to be employed as a full-time district based consulting teacher.

Precedents established during the first year of service in the district, the internship year, have been found to have a strong effect upon the long range success of the program. The consulting teacher provides inservice teacher training designed to develop skills which enable them to meet the needs of handicapped learners in their classrooms.

Such a mainstream program does not have an isolate effect upon these children alone, but in fact, has a strong impact upon the total school program. The learning objectives developed for handicapped learners become the core curriculum for all students. These objectives are termed minimum objectives. The learner's rate of achieving minimum objectives indicates eligibility for special education and effectiveness of service. Minimum objectives thus serve as a testing, monitoring, and evaluation system for special education. Through minimum objectives, the teacher and consulting teacher are able to respond immediately to the child who is achieving at less than the minimum rate.

During the introduction of this highly systematic data-based program of individualized instruction to the school districts, one must be continuously cognizant of the factors that insure the acceptance and maintenance of this program. Often consulting teachers are initially confronted with at least inertial resistance from teachers and/or administrators. Perhaps this is a result of the past dichotomy which existed between regular and special education. The problem therefore, is how the Consulting teacher model of special education can be incorporated and maintained in a school district so that special education will be an integral part of regular education.

Because of its demonstrated effectiveness, this model is highly attractive to school districts which do not yet have their own district consulting teacher. During the 1974-75 school year, 1,286 Vermont children with learning handicaps were served. Their average yearly gain for each year before service was .5 years. Their gain for one year with service was 1.6 years, more than three times the previous rate, (Knight, Coffin, 1976). The model's effectiveness, low cost and its potential to make a positive impact upon the district's total educational program, makes it especially valued to school superintendents and boards of education.

Despite the demonstrated value of this model for mainstreaming special education, some school districts have terminated consulting teacher services. In response to this lack of success in some districts, the University of Vermont in 1973 incorporated a planned district development component into the consulting teacher training program, (Knight, Christie, Egner, Paolucci and Lates, 1975). This district development component includes: 1. identification of the school district administrator(s) in control of special and regular education; 2. conducting of a needs assessment to determine district service and teacher training needs; 3. training district administrators to articulate the rationale for consulting teacher services; 4. coordinating consulting teacher services with other special and regular instructional programs; 5. disseminating the nature of the model and its effects on school and community groups; and 6. developing comprehensive proposals with administrators for child service and teacher training. The above is accomplished primarily through

planned and regular meetings and communications with district administrators, at least six months prior to implementation of service and throughout the first year of service. It is the intent of this research to explore, at a pilot level, the factors that relate to the school district's maintenance or termination of consulting teacher services. Attention will also be given to determining the effectiveness of planned district development in the maintaining of consulting teacher services.

PROCEDURE

During the past seven years, consulting teacher mainstreaming programs have been initiated in 31 of Vermont's 56 school districts. Five of these programs were unsuccessful, in that consulting teacher services were not maintained for more than two years. Twenty-two programs are successful in that consulting teacher services were maintained for more than two years. The remaining four programs are in the first year of implementation and cannot yet be evaluated. Success was defined in terms of at least two year longevity.

A review of data on child change and teacher training reported to the Vermont State Department of Education and the University of Vermont indicated that all districts but one received a comparable high level of service during the first two years. Further analysis of variables effecting the success in the maintenance of consulting teacher programs was necessary. A system was developed for measuring factors to which the success of a district might be attributed. The five political principles deliniated by Berle (1969) constituted a framework for this

system. These political principles are 1) that political power invariably fills any vacuum created by chaos within a political structure, 2) that political power is invariably personal, 3) that political power is invariably based upon a set of ideas and a philosophy, 4) that political power is invariably exercised through institutions, 5) and that political power is invariably paired with responsibility.

Administrator, consulting teacher, teacher and institutional behaviors are defined for the school district political structure according to Berle's principles as follows:

Berle's Principles	School Applications
1. Power fills facuum created by chaos	Needs assessment
2. Power is personal	Administrative support
3. Power is based on a set of ideas and a philosophy	Philosophical agreement
4. Power is exercised through institutions	Institutional support
5. Power is paired with responsibility	Effective service

Two observers from each school district, the consulting teacher or the administrator to whom the consulting teacher was responsible and a university or state supervisor, were asked to respond to the following questions related to the application of these principles during the first year of consulting teacher service.

Needs Assessment:

1. Did administrators acknowledge the need for providing special education in the regular classroom?
2. Did administrators acknowledge the need for teacher training in special education?

Administrative Support:

1. Did administrator offer an employment contract acceptable to the consulting teacher?
2. Did administrator employ only administrative, teaching and special education staff supportive of the consulting teacher model?

Philosophical Agreement:

1. Did administrators commend teachers for participating in inservice training and providing special education in the regular classroom?
2. Did administrators demonstrate knowledge of the content of the inservice training offerings? (e.g., behavior analysis, evaluation, curriculum)

Institutional Support:

1. Did the administrative and teaching staffs work cooperatively with the consulting teacher toward common goals? (e.g., evaluative systems, curriculum development)
2. Did the consulting teacher enhance the credibility of the school?

Effective Service:

1. Did the consulting teacher accelerate learning for the assigned number of children:
2. Did the consulting teacher provide inservice training for the assigned number of teachers?

RESULTS

Table 1 is a tabulation of responses for both successful and unsuccessful school districts. While there are large

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Table 1 goes about here

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differences in responses pertaining to principles I, II, III and IV, there is not a significant difference in response to questions related to princple V (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 goes about here

Table 2 is a tabulation of responses for the twenty-two successful districts. Ten districts had no planned district development. These programs were initiated in 1971 and 1973. Twelve districts had planned district development. These programs were initiated in 1974 and 1975.

Table 2 goes about here

Percentages of positive responses for districts with no planned development and pertaining to the first four principles ranged from 25 to 65 percent. Percentages for districts with planned development ranged from 92 to 100 percent. There are consistently high levels of positive responses for districts with planned district development and variable lower levels of positive responses for districts with no planned district development.

Figure 2 goes about here

DISCUSSION

This analysis supports the premise that initial success and acceptance of the consulting teacher mainstreaming model is achieved through gaining administrative and institutional political support. Both successful and unsuccessful districts attended equally to Berle's fifth principle of responsibility by providing effective service. However, the consulting teacher in unsuccessful districts attended minimally or not at all to the first four principles as compared with the consulting teacher of successful districts. This suggests that provision of effective service to handicapped learners alone will not cause this teacher training, data based model to be successful. It is essential that the consulting teacher also become involved in the affect generating factors related to Berle's first four principles.

Districts involved in planned district development consistently gained the administrative and institutional support related to Berle's first four principles as compared with districts in which there was no planned development. This suggests that planned district development can aid in gaining the administrative and institutional support that appear to relate to the success of programs. It is proposed that instructional units dealing with local school-community political systems and behavior analysis as it relates to adults in these political systems be incorporated into the training programs of all consulting teachers. In addition, it is proposed that a data retrieval system be developed that will more precisely measure levels of administrative and institutional support and that the relationship of this support to the service effectiveness be further analyzed.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lu S. Christie, Ann N. Egner, B. J. Lates, Hugh S. McKenzie, Phyllis Paolucci and Martha F. Knight were members of a team which first identified the need for district involvement with the mainstreaming concept prior to the consulting teacher internship year. To meet this need, the team then devised the district development component of the program which has had a strong positive effect upon district success.

The work reported herein is supported in part through Title VI ESEA Parts B and D from the Vermont State Department of Education and through Grant #OG-0-71-1637 from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, USOE. However, opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect position or policy of the USOE and no official endorsement of the USOE should be inferred.

TABLE 1: A TABULATION OF EVIDENCE OF APPLICATION OF BERLE'S PRINCIPLES IN SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL DISTRICTS

	SCHOOL DISTRICTS	I NEEDS ASSESSMENT	II ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	III PHILOSOPHICAL AGREEMENT	IV INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT	V EFFECTIVE SUPPORT
UNSUCCESSFUL	1	- -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	2	- -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	3	- -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	4	+ -	- -	- -	- -	- -
	5	- -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE RESPONSES	10%	0%	0%	0%	80%
SUCCESSFUL	1	+ +	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	2	+ +	- -	+ -	- -	+ +
	3	+ +	- -	- +	- -	+ +
	4	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	5	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	6	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	7	+ +	+ -	- -	- +	+ +
	8	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	9	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	10	+ -	+ -	- -	- -	+ +
	11	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	12	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	13	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	14	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	15	+ +	- +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	16	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	17	+ -	- -	- -	+ +	+ +
	18	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	19	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	20	- -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	21	- -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	22	+ -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE RESPONSES	84%	61%	64%	61%	100%

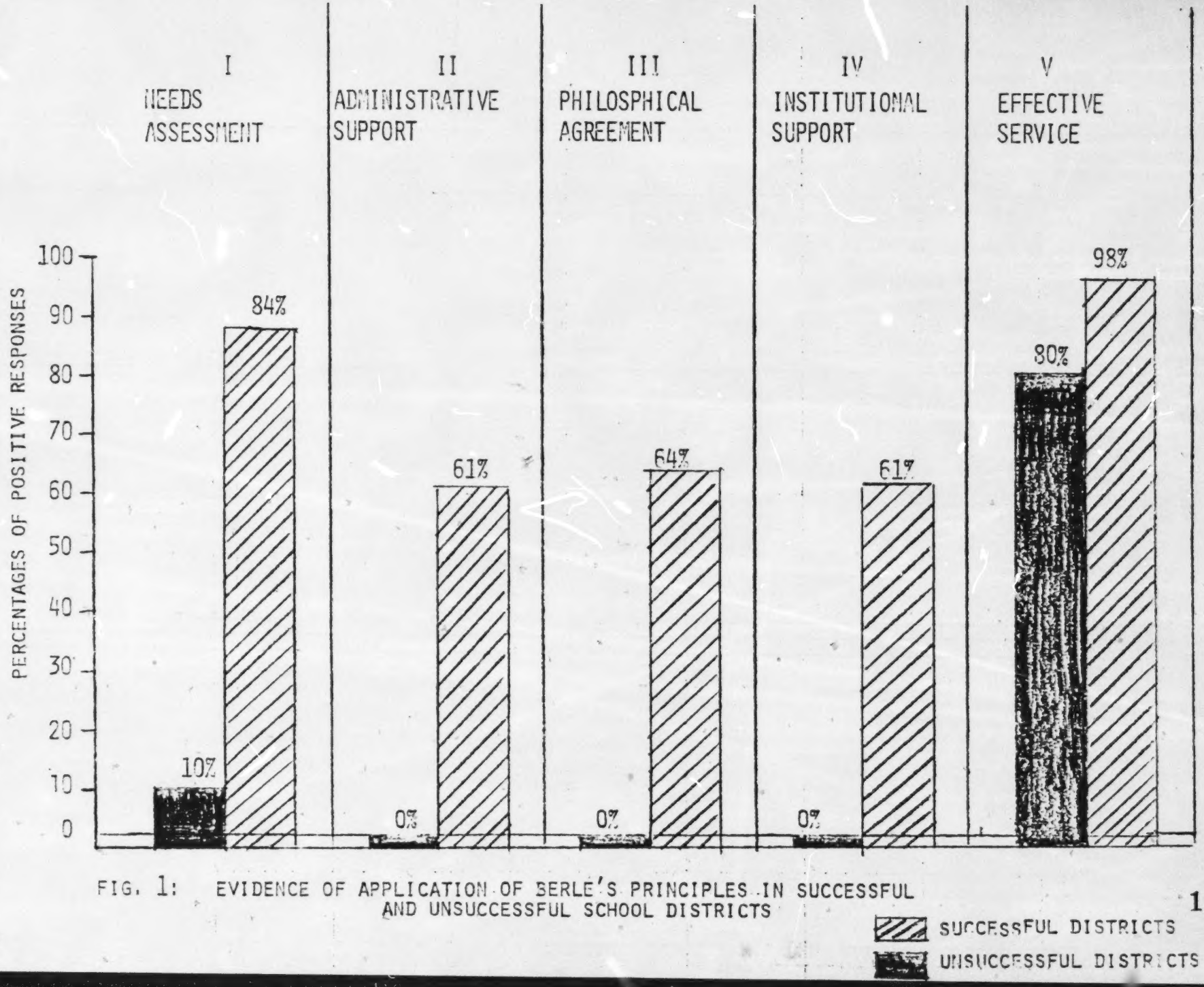

FIG. 1: EVIDENCE OF APPLICATION OF BERLE'S PRINCIPLES IN SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

TABLE 2: EVIDENCE OF APPLICATION OF BERLE'S PRINCIPLES IN SUCCESSFUL DISTRICTS WITH AND WITHOUT PLANNED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

	SCHOOL DISTRICTS	I NEEDS ASSESSMENT	II ADMINIS-TRATIVE SUPPORT	III PHILO-SOPHICAL AGREEMENT	IV INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT	V EFFECTIVE SUPPORT
WITHOUT DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT 1971 AND 1972	1	+ +	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	2	+ +	- -	+ -	- -	+ +
	3	+ +	- -	- +	- -	+ +
	4	+ -	+ -	- -	- -	+ +
	5	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	6	+ -	- -	- -	+ +	+ +
	7	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	8	- -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	9	- -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	10	+ -	- -	- -	- -	+ +
	PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE RESPONSES	65%	25%	30%	30%	100%
WITH DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT 1973 AND 1974	1	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	2	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	3	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	4	+ +	+ -	- -	- +	+ +
	5	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	6	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	7	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	8	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	9	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	10	+ +	- +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	11	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	12	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +	+ +
	PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE RESPONSES	100%	92%	92%	96%	100%

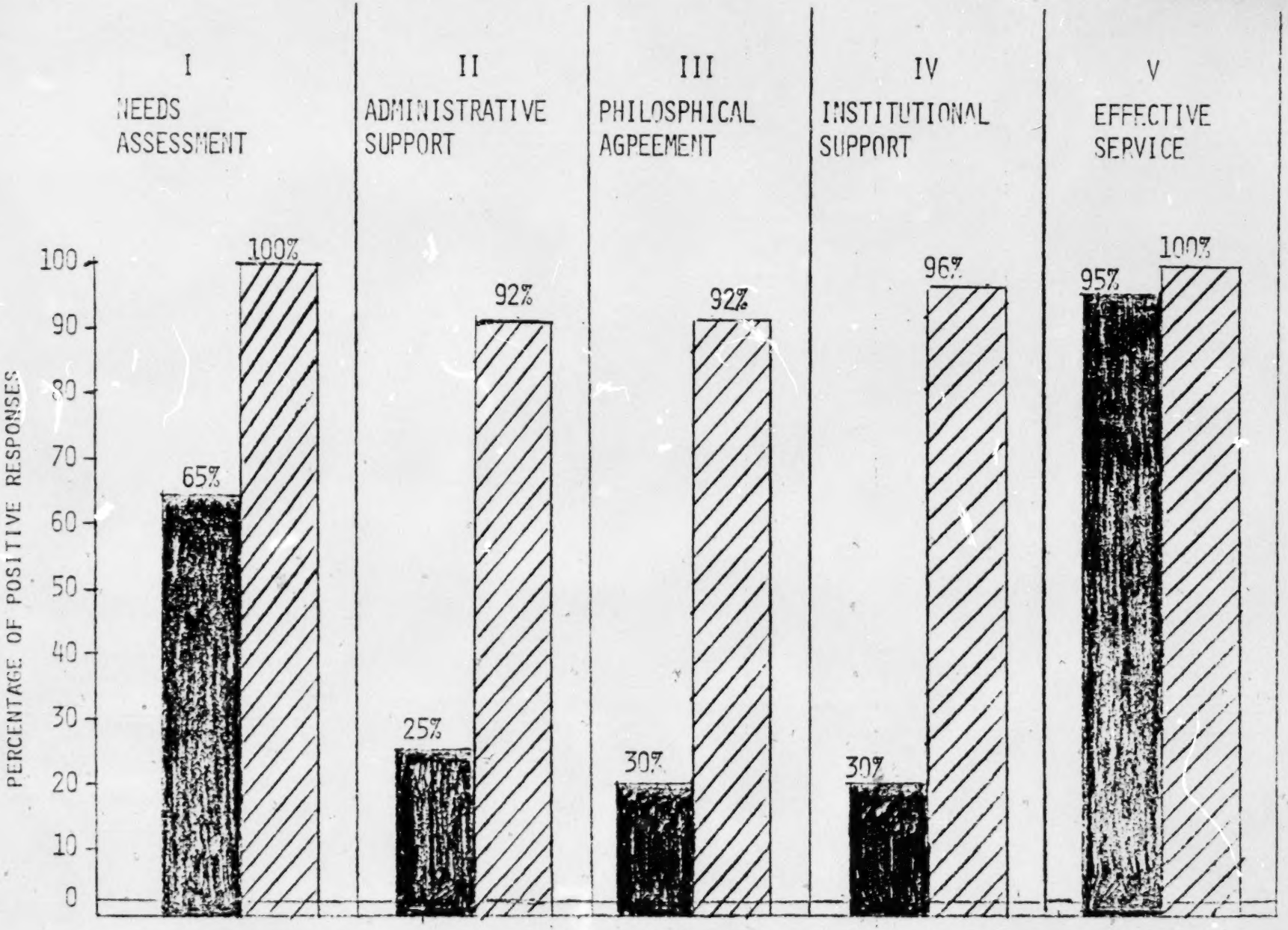

FIG. 2 EVIDENCE OF APPLICATION OF BERLE'S PRINCIPLES